

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim amendments and status:

1. (Currently amended) A method of allowing a player to participate in an ~~uninterrupted~~ reduced interruption gaming session when a jackpot over a threshold amount is won, the method utilizing a tracking device having a central server and wherein the tracking device is configured to be connected to a gaming machine, the method comprising ~~the steps of:~~

collecting player-related information;
storing the player-related information;
allowing the player to participate in a gaming session substantially uninterrupted;
recording jackpot-related information in the tracking device whenever a jackpot greater than a threshold amount is won;
crediting winnings to the player; and
generating a statement referencing the recorded jackpot-related information and stored player-related information after the player is done playing.

2. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, ~~wherein the allowing step comprises the step of~~ further comprising:

enabling a pre-programmed gaming machine to play an uninterrupted session, even if a reportable jackpot is won.

3. (Currently amended) The method of claim 2, wherein ~~the enabling a pre-programmed gaming machine to play an uninterrupted session, even if a reportable jackpot is won, comprises:~~ step comprises the steps of:

inserting an agent card;
selecting uninterrupted play from a menu screen on a display; and
inserting a player card.

4. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein ~~the allowing step the player to participate in a gaming session substantially uninterrupted,~~ comprises: the step of

providing the player with physical access to a game of chance dedicated to uninterrupted play.

5. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein ~~the~~ collecting player-related information step further comprises ~~the step of~~:

examining documents which qualify as proof of the player's identity.

6. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein ~~the~~ collecting player-related information step further comprises ~~the step of~~:

obtaining tax related information about the player.

7. (Currently amended) The method of claim 6, wherein ~~the~~ obtaining tax related information about the player step further comprises ~~the step of~~:

accessing ~~looking at~~ a document selected from the group consisting of the player's driver's license, the player's social security card, and the player's voter registration card.

8. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein the tax related information comprises the name, address, and tax identification number of the player.

9. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising ~~the step of~~ reporting jackpot-related information and player-related information to a taxing authority.

10. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising ~~the step of~~ providing the player with a statement referencing jackpot-related information after the player is done playing.

11. (Currently amended) An interactive network linking at least one gaming machine and a central control unit for allowing ~~uninterrupted~~ reduced interruption game play, the network comprising:

a central storage unit in electronic communication with the central control unit, wherein the central storage unit tracks and stores ~~having stored~~ player-related information adequate for compliance with reporting requirements of a taxing authority;

wherein the at least one gaming machine is in communication with the central control unit, the at least one gaming machine ~~being~~ is arranged to lock up whenever a jackpot greater than a threshold amount is won, the at least one gaming machine ~~sending~~ sends signals representing jackpot-related information to the central control unit, and the jackpot-related information ~~being~~ is adequate for compliance with reporting requirements of a taxing authority;

wherein the central control unit automatically ~~returning~~ returns signals to the at least one gaming machine when jackpot-related information is recorded, the returned signals causing the at least one gaming machine to unlock; and

a reporting unit in communication with the central control unit, the reporting unit capable of producing statements referencing player-related information and jackpot-related information.

12. (Original) The network of claim 11, wherein the central control unit is a computer.

13. (Original) The network of claim 11, wherein the player-related information includes a name, an address, and a tax identification number of a player.

14. (Currently amended) The network of claim 11, wherein the reporting unit comprises a printer for printing jackpot-related and player-related information ~~in~~ on a form required by a taxing authority for jackpots over a threshold amount.

15. (Currently amended) The network of claim 11, wherein the at least one gaming machine includes a microprocessor programmed with a protocol for ~~uninterrupted~~ reduced interruption game play.

16. (Currently amended) The network of claim 15, further comprising:
a networking computer connected to a plurality of gaming machines and the central control unit, the networking computer facilitating electronic communication between the plurality of gaming machines and the central control unit.

17. (Currently amended) The network of claim 15, further comprising:
a player card encoder, wherein each of the at least one gaming machines is in electronic communication with a card reader capable of reading information encoded on a player card.

18. (Original) The network of claim 17, wherein the at least one gaming machine is in communication with a keypad.

19. (Currently amended) The network of claim 18, wherein the protocol for ~~uninterrupted~~ reduced interruption game play is capable of being activated by an enabling event.

20. (Currently amended) The network of claim 19, wherein the enabling event includes insertion of an agent card into the card reader, selection of ~~uninterrupted~~ reduced interruption play using the keypad, and insertion of a player card into the card reader.

21. (Currently amended) The network of claim 20, wherein the protocol for ~~uninterrupted~~ reduced interruption game play is deactivated by removal of the player card from the card reader.

22. (Original) The network of claim 15, wherein physical access is limited to the at least one gaming machine.

A4 23. (Currently amended) A tracking device utilizing a computer program product comprising a computer useable medium having a protocol stored thereon, wherein said protocol comprises machine readable code to enable a computer network to allow for an ~~uninterrupted~~ a reduced interruption play session on a gaming machine to which the tracking device connects, even when a reportable jackpot is won, wherein the machine readable code comprises:

code to enable a central storage computer to store player-related information;

code to enable a gaming machine to enter an ~~uninterrupted~~ reduced interruption play session in response to a user input;

code to enable a gaming machine to send signals representing jackpot-related information to the central storage computer when a reportable jackpot is won;

code to enable the central storage computer to receive and record jackpot-related information;

code to enable a gaming machine to communicate to the central storage computer that an ~~uninterrupted~~ a reduced interruption session has ended; and

code to allow the central storage computer to generate a statement including player-related information and jackpot-related information after ~~an uninterrupted~~ a reduced interruption session has ended.

24. (Currently amended) A method of allowing a player to participate in an ~~uninterrupted~~ reduced interruption session on a gaming machine ~~in electronic communication with a central computer~~, the method utilizing a tracking device having a central computer and wherein the tracking device is configured to be in electronic communication with the gaming machine, even when a reportable jackpot is won, the method comprising ~~the steps of:~~

collecting player-related information;

storing the player-related information in an electronic medium such that it can be accessed by the central computer;

allowing the player to play substantially uninterrupted on the gaming machine;

44 sending signals representing jackpot-related information from the gaming machine to an electronic storage device when a reportable jackpot is won;

recording the jackpot-related information in an electronic medium using the tracking device such that it can be accessed by the central computer;

crediting winnings to the gaming machine;

accessing the player-related information and jackpot-related information when the player is done playing; and

generating a statement referencing jackpot-related information and player-related information, the statement being in a form complying with tax regulations.

25. (Currently amended) The method of ~~allowing a player to participate in an uninterrupted session of claim 24~~, further comprising: ~~the step of~~

returning signals from the central computer to the gaming machine after the jackpot-related information has been recorded, the returned signals causing the gaming machine to unlock.

26. (Currently amended) The method of ~~allowing a player to participate in an uninterrupted session~~ of claim 24, wherein ~~the~~ allowing the player to play substantially uninterrupted on the gaming machine ~~step~~ comprises: ~~the steps of~~

providing the player with a player card encoded with at least one piece of player-related information;

inserting an agent card into a card reader in communication with the gaming machine;

entering enabling information into a keypad in communication with the gaming machine;

removing the agent card from the card reader;

introducing the player card into the card reader;

sending enabling information from the gaming machine to the central computer;

receiving a return signal from the central computer confirming authorization to participate in uninterrupted play; and

beginning an uninterrupted session on the gaming machine.

A4 27. (Currently amended) The method of ~~allowing a player to participate in an uninterrupted session~~ of claim 24, wherein ~~the~~ allowing the player to play substantially uninterrupted on the gaming machine ~~step~~ further comprises: ~~the step of~~

providing physical access to a gaming machine dedicated to ~~uninterrupted~~ reduced interruption game play.

28. (Currently amended) The method of ~~allowing a player to participate in an uninterrupted session~~ of claim 24, wherein the statement comprises IRS Form W2-G.

29. (Currently amended) A method of allowing ~~uninterrupted~~ reduced interruption gaming ~~on a gaming machine~~, the method utilizing a tracking device having a central computer that is configured to be connected to a gaming machine, the method comprising:

collecting player-related information adequate to satisfy the reporting requirements of a taxing authority;

storing the player-related information;

allowing the player to participate in ~~an uninterrupted~~ a reduced interruption gaming session;

~~locking up the gaming machine when a jackpot greater than a threshold amount determined by the taxing authority is won;~~

~~receiving~~ sending electronic signals representing jackpot-related information from the gaming machine ~~to a~~ at the central computer when a jackpot greater than the threshold amount is won, the jackpot-related information being adequate to satisfy the reporting requirements of the taxing authority;

recording the jackpot-related information when electronic signals representing the jackpot-related information are received ~~sent~~ from the gaming machine ~~to~~ at the central computer;

returning signals from the central computer to the gaming machine when jackpot-related information has been recorded ~~[[;]]~~ that automatically ~~unlocking~~ unlock the gaming machine in response to the returned signals; and

generating a statement referencing the recorded jackpot-related information and stored player-related information after the player is done participating.

BY 30. (Currently amended) The method of claim 29, wherein ~~the~~ collecting player-related information adequate to satisfy the reporting requirements of a taxing authority ~~step~~ further comprises ~~the step of~~:

accessing ~~looking at~~ a document selected from the group consisting of the player's driver's license, the player's social security card, and the player's voter registration card.

31. (Currently amended) The method of claim 29, further comprising: ~~the step of~~ reporting jackpot-related information and player-related information to a taxing authority.

32. (Currently amended) The method of claim 29, further comprising: ~~the step of~~ providing the player with a statement referencing jackpot-related information after the player is done participating.

33. (Currently amended) The method of claim 29, wherein ~~the~~ allowing the player to participate in a reduced interruption gaming session ~~step~~ comprises: ~~the step of~~

enabling a pre-programmed gaming machine to execute a protocol putting the gaming machine in to uninterrupted mode.

34. (Currently amended) The method of claim 33, wherein ~~the enabling a pre-~~
programmed gaming machine to execute a protocol putting the gaming machine in to
uninterrupted mode ~~step~~ comprises ~~the step of~~:

inserting an agent card;
selecting uninterrupted play from a menu screen on a display; and
inserting a player card.

35. (Currently amended) The method of claim 29, wherein ~~the allowing the player to~~
participate in a reduced interruption gaming session further ~~step~~ comprises: ~~the step of~~
providing the player with physical access to a game of chance dedicated to ~~uninterrupted~~
reduced interruption play.

36. (Currently amended) An interactive network linking at least one gaming machine
and a central control unit for allowing ~~uninterrupted~~ reduced interruption play, the network
comprising:

1A4 a central storage unit in electronic communication with the central control unit, wherein
the central storage unit tracks and stores ~~having stored~~ player-related information adequate for
compliance with reporting requirements of a taxing authority;

wherein the at least one gaming machine is in communication with the central control
unit, the at least one gaming machine ~~being~~ is arranged to interrupt play only whenever a stop
signal is received from the central control unit or an error occurs, the at least one gaming
machine ~~sending~~ sends signals representing jackpot-related information to the central control
unit whenever a reportable jackpot is won, and the jackpot-related information ~~being~~ is adequate
for compliance with reporting requirements of a taxing authority;

wherein the central control unit automatically ~~returning~~ returns stop signals to the at least
one gaming machine if a write error occurs when jackpot-related information is recorded, the
returned stop signals causing the at least one gaming machine to interrupt play; and

a reporting unit in communication with the central control unit, the reporting unit capable of producing statements referencing player-related information and jackpot-related information.

37. (Original) The network of claim 36, wherein the central control unit is a computer.

38. (Original) The network of claim 36, wherein the player-related information includes a name, an address, and a tax identification number of a player.

39. (Original) The network of claim 36, wherein the reporting unit comprises a printer for printing jackpot-related and player-related information in a form required by a taxing authority.

40. (Currently amended) The network of claim 36, wherein the at least one gaming machine includes a microprocessor programmed with a protocol for ~~uninterrupted~~ reduced interruption play.

41. (Currently amended) The network of claim 40, further comprising:
a networking computer connected to a plurality of gaming machines and the central control unit, the networking computer facilitating electronic communication between the plurality of gaming machines and the central control unit.

42. (Currently amended) The network of claim 40, further comprising:
a player card encoder, wherein each of the at least one gaming machines is in electronic communication with a card reader capable of reading information encoded on a player card.

43. (Original) The network of claim 42, wherein the at least one gaming machine is in communication with a keypad.

44. (Currently amended) The network of claim 43, wherein the protocol for ~~uninterrupted~~ reduced interruption play is capable of being activated by an enabling event.

45. (Currently amended) The network of claim 44, wherein the enabling event includes insertion of an agent card into the card reader, selection of ~~uninterrupted~~ reduced interruption play using the keypad, and insertion of a player card into the card reader.

Atty Docket No.: 10407/640
Serial No. 09/904,061

46. (Currently amended) The network of claim 45 wherein the protocol for ~~uninterrupted~~ reduced interruption play is deactivated by removal of the player card from the card reader.

AM 47. (Original) The network of claim 40, wherein physical access is limited to the at least one gaming machine.

48. (Deleted)

49. (Deleted)

50. (Deleted)
